

1985 New York to Paris Transatlantic Rally

1. Introduction

Equipment and Crew

Aircraft: 1982 Piper Turbo Arrow PA28-201RT N74KG
ILS -1, VOR -2, ADF -1, LORAN-C, Autopilot, Standard Fuel Tanks,
Jeppesen ProStar (with Lat/Long capability),
Jeppesen E6B (laid flat to measure true heading via sun's shadow)

Owned by: Jeffrey Flower – Architect, Amston, CT.
Licenses: Private ASEL, Instrument, 600TT

Captain: Mark Yachad – Instructor, American Flyers, KISP, NY.
Licences: ATP ASMEL, CFI-AI-ME, USA, Canada, South Africa 2500TT

How we joined up

Jeff was my student when he obtained his Instrument Rating in October 1984, and called me one day in March 1985, and made me an offer I couldn't refuse. Jeff did most of the flying, we alternated approaches and landings, and I did all the overwater navigation (The Canadian ALTP requires practical knowledge of solar navigation – and that's how we tracked the North Atlantic, when out of Loran range – which was 90% of the time. Don't forget that the magnetic compass is absolutely useless at the latitudes we flew).



Jeff Flowers (left), Mark Yachad (right), in front of N74KG

2. The Trip Eastbound

Saturday June 15 1985

Sunday June 16 1985

At our hotel in Montreal, Transport Canada inspectors gave a very informative briefing on North Atlantic Minimum Navigation Performance Specifications (NATMNPS), and we enjoyed a few additional comments from seasoned North Atlantic flyers.

70 aircraft departed Morristown NJ, led by a Cessna Citation, followed in decreasing speed order by the remaining aircraft.

Over the center of the Morristown runway complex was a white marker. Upon passing overhead, we were clocked for the Precision Navigation – 3 legs, terminating at a point a few miles north of St Hubert airport (CYHU), Montreal. We passed overhead each checkpoint at between 600ft and 800ft AGL, making the first checkpoint 20 seconds late, the second on time, and the third 10 seconds late. A comment heard on the ground that evening was “ I didn’t think of using my Loran!”

We flew southeast, leveled off at 1500ft MSL, turned northbound at the Varazzano Bridge to fly in procession up the Hudson River, with Manhattan off our right wingtip, and the top of the World Trade Center above us.

The organizers managed to persuade NY Tracon to allow the aircraft into the TCA in the middle of La Guardia and Kennedy Approach Sectors. Hats off to the Controllers.

Of course, there is always the curious pilot who is determined to view the spectacle first-hand, in spite of New York’s request to stay away from the Hudson River that day. One sightseeing Cherokee 140 who couldn’t hold altitude, passed us southbound at 1300 ft – inside the TCA without a clearance.

At the Alpine Towers, just west of White Plains, we all set our own direct course to St Jean, Quebec, Canada, and climbed to 11500 ft MSL.

A first-class dinner was laid on that evening in one of the St Hubert hangars, and we left the festivities early to start the flight-planning for tomorrow’s first leg .

Monday June 17 1985

Takeoff CYHU scheduled 14:10Z, actual 14:32Z.

We were casually informed by the organizers (our first of many surprises) that the Precision Navigation portion was based on our ETA vs ATA at CFYB (Frobisher Bay – Iqualit, NWT), as opposed to ETE vs ATE, as has been the case in all previous rallies I have flown. So, through no fault of our own (rather because of the accumulated take-off delays of the leading aircraft), we were penalized 22 minutes even before take-off.

We stopped at Sept-Isles (CYZW) and Kuujuaq (CYVP) for fuel, airports which are accustomed to seeing 70 aircraft per year, never mind in one day!. Congestion at the fuel pumps further exacerbated our position.

We cruised at FL180, on oxygen, and the magnificent CAVU conditions enabled me to renew my pilotage skills, last practiced seriously prior to 1980 in South Africa. One really becomes spoilt with the proliferation of VOR's in the more populated areas of Canada and the US.

At this point, the magnetic compass was swinging wildly, even though there was only about 30-40° of magnetic variation. I now had the opportunity to practice my solar navigation for real. Taking bearings off the sun, we referenced the Heading Indicator to True Heading only, not to use the compass again until close to Great Britain.

We were never more than ½ mile off course, according to the excellent ONC charts, and this overland leg built my confidence in navigating by the sun, which held me in excellent stead for the overwater legs (where, of course, no ground references exist to compare actual track).

The scenery is magnificent – total desolation, no trees, isolated brush only, but strikingly beautiful. The lake waters are turquoise, pristinely clear.



The Canadian Far North

Tuesday June 18 1985

We touched down at CYFB on June 18 at 01:48Z, OAT +2°C, for a total airtime of 09:31 hours.

On the way to the “Hotel”, the taxi driver informed us that in winter, because it's *too cold*, very little snow exists.

At 02:30Z in the “Hotel's” dining room, was an address by the Mayor of Frobisher, followed by the presentation of prizes. Thereafter came the expected rebellion by the participants regarding the unorthodox timing regulations. Realistically, the only aircraft which had the chance to beat fuel or take-off delays were the leading few fast turbine aircraft. But in the final analysis, the rules stuck.

We slept with curtains closed – not funny – summer in the Arctic means the sun shines 24 hours a day!

CYFB to BGGH (Godthab, Greenland)

Weather CAVU as in 200 miles visibility! Our expected departure was 14:10Z, with one departure every 15 minutes for IFR separation.

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At 17:45Z waiting very patiently, we called for our clearance:

CYFB: N74KG, you're #6 for departure, expect 1 1/2 hours delay.

N74KG: N74KG requests change flight-plan from IFR to VFR.

CYFB: Roger, but you won't get an IFR clearance in the air – Montreal won't give it to you.

Well, uncontrolled airspace is uncontrolled. VMC is VMC. CAVU is CAVU. We weren't waiting any more.

We lifted off at 17:53Z. Needless to say, we would very much have liked to have even seen one other aircraft. I'm all in favor of IFR separation, but 15 minutes between aircraft, with the fastest airborne first with 200 miles visibility, is a little ridiculous.

We set course 042° True at FL115 to Cape Dyer, inside the Arctic circle, using the sun and E6B to maintain our track. Forget VOR's and ADF – there is at least 150 miles on this leg devoid of any navaid reception.

We crossed Cape Dyer NDB at 1943Z (one minute behind ETA), and set course to Godthab 119° True – Initial.

At this time we heard 2 classic pilots' requests:

1. "Cape Dyer Radio, this is Malibu 80E, could you advise me of my groundspeed?" What happened to pilotage in 200 mile visibility???
2. "Cape Dyer Radio, could you advise us if we seem to be tracking out proper?"

Well, it takes all types.

Needless to say, Sondrestrom gave us our IFR clearance within 3 minutes of making initial contact – so much for the Frobisher controller's "dire warnings".

At about 20:30Z, the Heading Indicator failed. No sweat, we'd been flying since Montreal using only the sun to maintain true track. We used the rotating card on the E6B as our makeshift Heading Indicator, reference to the sun's shadow, and moved the autopilot heading bug to maintain the appropriate direction. (A technical note – the autopilot heading bug does NOT wildly chase the free-rotating heading card!)

The sun was shining on us, literally and figuratively. If it had been IMC, we would have had a real problem. When we finally picked up Godthab KU NDB, we were only 13 miles south of course, after a 450 mile leg – a very respectable 1.7° error.

Once again, the scenery was spectacular – solid rock 7000ft high.

We touched down at 21:38Z on a runway which didn't need foundations, carved out of the side of the mountain. Our total ATE was 03:45 hours, vs a flight-planned ETE of 03:50 – average groundspeed 161 Kts.

Once again the combination of Rally rules and Pilot Stupidity caused at least one accident, and a few more near accidents.

The rules stated that 4 minutes must elapse from overhead KU NDB to touchdown. A Beech Baron was too fast on his timing, and attempted to delay touchdown until 2/3 down the 3600ft runway. To compound that error, one pilot decided to go-around, and the other decided to stay on the runway (Cockpit co-ordination? PIC?). Result, very luckily, only one bent prop! But wait, here's the

clinchier – rather than wait for a new prop to be shipped out to Greenland, the French crew wanted to take-off and fly single-engine to Europe. Of course, they were later talked out of it.

(Author's note – years later, I would be a Captain on large 4-engine passenger aircraft. I had the opportunity to do a few 3-engine maintenance ferries – a take-off requiring explicit planning, crew co-ordination and airmanship. In hindsight, it astounds me to reflect on the stupidity of that Baron crew then).

Priorities first: Gronlandsfly (Greenland Airways) has a major service facility on the field, but their mechanics, accustomed to state-of-the-art equipment, had never seen an air-driven Directional Gyro before. Between their equipment and my limited avionics ability, we brought the DG up to specifications. One learns something new every day!

This was the first occasion we had seen green grass since leaving Montreal – we felt as if we were in civilization again.

Thursday June 20 1985

Do to inclement weather on Wednesday 19th, no flights departed on that day.

After an in-depth review of the weather patterns, we decided the best route to Iceland would be southeast to Nassarsuaq, then non-stop to Reykjavik. Our previous intention to fly due east over the Greenland ice-cap to Kulusuk on the east coast was nullified due to weather of 100 ft and 1/8th mile visibility.

After resigning ourselves to the fact that once again we would have to pick up the \$4.85 / gallon Avgas bill (Author's note – remember that was 20 years ago!), we departed VMC at 15:30Z for Nassarsuaq following the western coast southwards, and then flew up the fjord eastwards to the airport. In flight, we paired up for conversation with the British crew of a C210 (who later won 3rd overall).

We touched down at 17:39Z for an ATE of 02:09 hours, and were immediately attacked by blackflies.

We met the owner of a US Midwest Aerospatiale dealership, who was waiting with a brand-new Trinidad for the westerly winds to decrease, so that he could continue his trip to the US.

After obtaining a solid weather briefing, and studying the recent Actual Winds Aloft reports, we charted our route on the ONC maps spread out on the floor of the weather office. Due to an average 35 knot headwind component, flying north of a low-pressure system, accurate Point-of-no-Return and Radius of action calculations were mandatory. We planned on landing with 1 hour's fuel in the tanks.

We lifted off at 18:53Z, and departed eastwards over the fjords, to minimize fuel consumption, in formation with the British C210. We had perfect ground reference points by which to calculate actual wind conditions. Climbing to FL110, our average groundspeed was 131 knots vs TAS of 159 knots. As long as our groundspeed remained higher than 110 knots, we would land with fuel in the tanks.

Understandably, I was a little more hyperactive than normal, continually taking bearings from the sun, monitoring our position and progress with regard to our point-of-no-return. All those long hours of groundschool invested in learning about advanced navigation began to pay off. We reached the PNR 7 minutes early, and about 30 minutes later, I relaxed even more, when the LORAN started

to receive accurately, about 300 miles west of Iceland. This was the first time when the LORAN had worked *accurately* (cross-checked with my solar navigation) since leaving Montreal.

We elected to bypass the Precision Navigation portion of this leg, as it would have entailed a 13-minute deviation to position "Bravo" (in later years, very familiar to me on Transatlantic flights!), which would have been an unnecessary bite into our fuel reserves.



Overhead Reykjavík

Friday June 21 1985

We landed at Reykjavik at 0002Z on Friday, after a 05:09 hours flight, one minute off my ETE of 05:10 hours, with 9.8 gallons (approximately 45 minutes) of fuel in the tanks.

AOPA Iceland gave us a welcome demonstration of absolute efficiency in hospitality. They made us feel most welcome, and treated us to a cabaret at the Broadway Disco on Friday night, as well as personal transport back to the hotels in the AOPA members' own cars, in order to get to know us better. WOW! Their attitude is typical of the general friendliness and cleanliness of the country.

Saturday June 22 1985

The majority of the participants left this morning, but many had to return after encountering severe headwinds. In light of these reports, we elected to relax and enjoy Reykjavik for an additional day.

Sunday June 23 1985

The low-pressure system had now moved far enough eastwards, so that the headwind component affecting us was not more than 15 Knots. We departed at 10:07Z and climbed to FL060 eastbound above the clouds to Hornafjordur on the east coast of Iceland for refueling. At \$1.35 / gallon, it was hard to refuse (there was a price war on!).

A breathtaking view of the volcanoes peaking above the clouds spoilt us all the way. Approaching the east coast, we descended to 1500 ft MSL above the ocean, and homed in on the NDB. We touched down at 11:05Z, on a gravel strip, with a 20 knot crosswind component. Here we met one of many participants who wouldn't be completing the trip. A C172RG had blown its turbocharger, and was consuming oil, so the crew was returning it to Reykjavik for repairs.

We departed Hornafjordur at 12:32Z, and set a direct course at FL130 to the Faroe Islands. Loran was coming in strong, so I left Jeff to manage the flying and caught up on some much-needed rest.

Approaching Vagar in the Faroes, the weather started to deteriorate – this was the eastern extent of the movement of the low-pressure system, which had been plaguing us all the way from Greenland.

After reviewing the approach chart, we understood that this was the hairiest approach of the whole trip, requiring an offset localizer approach down the middle of a narrow fjord, at 1400 ft MSL and lower, with the peaks on either side up to 3000 ft MSL, in addition to the associated turbulence.

We broke out at 800 ft MSL, about 2 miles from the runway, and for the first time caught a glimpse of our surroundings. Full needle deflection on the localizer means only one thing!

(Author's note – After more than 25 years and 10,000 hours in the air, including countless Cat II landings around the world, Vagar's approach that day remains the hairiest I've ever done).

We touched down at Vagar (EKVG) at 14:32Z, refueled quickly, and departed for Prestwick, Scotland at 15:31Z. On departure, we flew the complicated missed approach procedure, being the only sane route in IMC, which would safeguard us from painting the mountains unexpectedly.

After awhile, the compass settled down to manageable levels of Magnetic Variation of about 10°. This leg was IMC all the way. Approaching Scotland, we requested the weather from Glasgow (1200ft and 4 miles) and Prestwick (300 and ½). We elected to proceed to Prestwick, just for the challenge of doing a solid IMC approach to minimums.

Breaking out at minimums, and seeing the colorful approach lighting system before us, I remarked to the tower controller, "That's a very sophisticated lighting system compared to our smaller airports in the US". He replied, "This, Sir, is our international airport!"

We touched down at 18:14Z, at a totally deserted airport, being the only aircraft to land in the past 3 hours. The bar, at which we were the only customers, cooked us up a great fried chicken and chips at \$3.40. While we were enjoying this very welcome meal, three Scottish youngsters (otherwise known in Britain as "aviation nuts"), came in and told us that they'd heard us enroute on their Airband radio, and raced over from Glasgow to watch us land. Now that's dedication!

We filed at AIS, the British equivalent of a Flight Service Station, and were given free RAF enroute charts – much simpler to use than Jepps. The tanks were filled at \$2.80 / gallon, and we departed for Paris Le Bourget at 20:30Z.

Climbing enroute to FL110, we started picking up ice, and so descended to FL080 in solid IMC for the remainder of the flight.

Over south-east England, we heard an inordinate amount of chatter on the Center frequency, and after enquiring, we learned that Air India's Flight 182 had exploded near Shannon, with all 329 lives lost. The same day at Tokyo's Narita airport, baggage which was offloaded from Canadian Pacific's Flight 003 (which had landed ahead of schedule), exploded in the airport terminal. That 747's early landing thus prevented a double tragedy on that day.

There were embedded thunderstorms over the English Channel, and we requested vectors from ATC (the best we could do was navigate around the lightning strikes). We were informed that, “Our radar can’t show precipitation!” At least we had a light show into the bargain – St. Elmo’s Fire built up a 3” arc around the tip of the propeller, alternatively darkening and lightening for about 45 minutes, and occasionally, small balls of sparks would roll down the instrument panel.

Crossing into France, it was “Say Again” time, in order to decipher clearances delivered in a thick French accent. We were cleared for the ILS at Paris Le Bourget, and broke out at 800 feet, with not much of a view of Paris by night, due to the low visibility. We touched down at 24:00Z (2AM local), too late for the Rally Awards ceremony at the Alcazar, but after a satisfying day of competent flying, we were too tired anyway.

3. *The European Tour*

Monday June 24 1985

We slept late, and forgot about aviation, while we toured Paris. Great place, but ridiculously expensive, unless you’ve got Swiss Francs to spend.

The rally now being over, our schedule was our own, and we started our sightseeing trip around Europe.

Tuesday June 25 1985

Transair France is one of the least efficient FBO’s which I’ve ever had the misfortune to use. Perhaps they usually cater only for heavy metal, but a customer is a customer, and to have to wait 2 hours for a refuel is ridiculous, especially when they charge a \$20 “Handling fee”, just to look at the customer. A few other participants chose to patronize Euralair, across the ramp, and got 4 Star service. In addition to the handling fee, Transair charged us \$12 for the privilege of using their facilities to file IFR to Zurich, Switzerland.

We lifted off at 12:32Z via the ARSIL 3C departure. Although this SID takes a roundabout route staying clear of De Gaulle and Orly traffic, it provided a magnificent aerial view of the city. My camera clicked overtime. We entered IMC at FL070, and were solid IMC cruising at FL110.

All aircraft over 4000 lbs MTOW pay ATC fees for using the IFR system in Europe, and I was told by a local corporate jet operator that their annual ATC bill runs into 5 figures.

I was amazed at how few General Aviation aircraft were on the Center frequencies, and after being told by an English pilot that he shelled out over 6000 pounds for his private ticket, one can understand why.

Unless a pilot files preferential routing in Europe, it is an exception to receive a clearance “Cleared as filed”. We had plenty of practice copying lengthy clearances in-flight, until we learnt how to play the game.

We touched down at Zurich at 14:32Z in pleasant VMC (5000’ and 10 miles). Switzerland was the only country where Customs formalities are rigidly enforced. We had to show our Passports and Pilot’s licenses each time we wanted to exit the Jet Aviation FBO to the ramp. What a change in attitude from Transair!.

Jet Aviation also caters primarily to the Turbine market, but we were topped-off and tires inflated within 15 minutes of our arrival. They also maintain a comfortable pilot's lounge with a complimentary well-stocked soft-drink bar. Typical Swiss efficiency, and much better value for money than the French!



Zurich on the Lake

Wednesday June 26 1985

We planned to fly VFR to a small airport in the Alps for some sightseeing, but limited visibility in haze changed our minds. Instead we opted for Brussels, Belgium. Once again, in order to gain access to the AIS facilities, all types of Aviator ID must be shown. Once inside, the staff were extremely helpful, and photocopied, at no charge, all the charts which we wanted. By this time the ICAO Flight Plan form was firmly imprinted in my grey matter, and I had completely forgotten what the FAA form looked like.

We lifted off at 16:00Z and entered IMC at FL040, broke out on top at FL100, and continued the climb to FL120 for some spectacular views of the Alps to the south, peaking above the clouds. As we approached Luxembourg, the clouds began to dissipate, and we requested a VFR descent for photos of the patchwork-quilt countryside. We flew the ILS visually into Brussels National (EBBR), and landed at 18:30Z. We parked a stone's throw from Air Force One; George Bush Senior was visiting, and needless to say, there was no shortage of CIA hardware around the aircraft.

This Belgian FBO, Abelag Aviation, is unquestionably the poorest in terms of pilot facilities and assistance, which I have ever encountered in 7 years of flying. Basically a Customs and Fueling facility, they were so cheap that they would not even give us a ride to the main passenger terminal $\frac{3}{4}$ mile away, which distance we were obliged to walk, carrying our bags. In the terminal we had to look for pay-phones to call local hotels for accommodation. This left us with a very poor impression of Belgian service.

The city of Brussels showed us two distinct faces: one, the old world magnificence, and two, the Los Angeles of Europe, with all the accompanying foul air and filth. Just like New York is to America, Brussels is to Europe – the absolutely dirt-cheapest place to buy anything in Europe. We toured the city and enjoyed the old world.



Air Force One parked a stone's throw away from us

Friday 28 June 1985

On the way to the airport, at the Downtown North Railroad Terminal, we stopped in at AIS, explained that we were visiting pilots, and were given free of charge, Enroute and Approach charts for Ostende (EBOS), on the English Channel coast. We wanted to visit this historic site of World War II.

We lifted off from Brussels at 10:32Z, and enjoyed magnificent VMC all the way to Ostende, with the airport almost on the beach.

We touched down at 1110Z. The AIS personnel were very helpful, and we got the impression that they were more concerned with our safety than we were, in their “complicated” airspace. Little do they know what complications are; try Newark, New Jersey on a Friday afternoon.

We walked the boardwalk on the beach, taking in the memorials to Allied troops who fell during the Invasion. We lunched at a beach restaurant “Le Chevalier” which served freshly caught Ocean Salmon – what a treat!

Back at AIS, we filed a mixed flight plan: VFR across the English Channel, then IFR over England, destination Biggin Hill (EGKB), the famous Battle of Britain airfield.

We departed Ostende at 14:37Z. This was our final lesson in European airspace rules – when VFR, don't count on assistance from anybody.

Approaching the white cliffs of Dover at 2500 ft MSL, we called Kent Radar for our IFR clearance, and were informed that there was no flight plan in the ATC system. Moral – a Mixed Flight Plan is for academic interest only!

However, this apparent inconvenience turned out to be a disguised pleasure: To remain VFR, we had to descend to 2000 ft MSL.

The Kent controller asked, “Are you familiar with the area?”

“Negative”

“Well, I'm not busy right now, would you like a tour of the English countryside?”

“You bet!”

He vectored us to Canterbury, patiently waited while the blip on his radar screen did 360's taking photos, and then to Leeds Castle, and various other historic landmarks in the Kent Downs, before handing us off to Biggin Hill approach.

Could English ATC ever strike with staff like that?



The Castle Tour

We touched down at Biggin Hill at 16:02Z. This is obviously a popular Customs Entry airport; there was no shortage of other foreign aircraft on the ramp. After clearing customs, we taxied over to Biggin Hill Flying Club, where an instructor very helpfully enlightened us as to the vagaries of flying in the London TMA. We decided that the best tiedown spot for our London stopover would be Elstree Aerodrome on London's Northwest boundary.



Right Downwind at Biggin Hill

We lifted off from Biggin Hill at 17:05Z. We QSY'd immediately to Heathrow approach on 119.9 for a special VFR TMA clearance, northbound at 1500 ft MSL, right over the S-bends in the Thames, then a 360 over Tower bridge for photos.

We touched down on Elstree's 2000 ft strip at 17:25Z, after a magnificent 20-minute tour over London. We taxied in, and were met with incredulous stares from the locals, "You flew that all the way across the Atlantic?" "Well, yes, how do you think your club C152 got over here?"

They were super-friendly, and bought us a (very) Welcome draft at the Flying Club's bar. This Flying Club camaraderie is an integral element of British Aviation, which I have not found to exist anywhere else in the world.

Even though a Private License is many times more expensive than in the US, there is still no shortage of British youngsters scrounging the pennies to save for a lesson.

Sunday June 30 1985

After 2 days in London, visiting long-lost school-friends, and the RAF museum in Hendon, we departed Elstree at 09:25Z CAVU 2500 ft MSL to Duxford, the premier British Air Museum, also of World War II fame.

We touched down at 09:45Z, and taxied past Concorde 002, a B52, a VC10, a Britannia, as well as about 30 other historic aircraft, all for public viewing. Duxford's 4900 ft runway is the shortest strip any B52 or Concorde has ever flown into – of course, it's a one-way ticket!



On the Low Pass over Duxford

After saturating our minds with all this magnificent aviation historia, we departed at 12:30Z, with 2 low passes down the runway at 100 ft AGL, for a panoramic photo session.

Once again, the Heathrow controller was very accommodating to our request for photos over the Thames again. We touched down 13:05Z at Biggin Hill for our last quick stop in England to clear Customs outbound. We enjoyed a hearty lunch of real English fish and chips, and departed at 13:45Z IFR to Le Bourget again to join the rest of the Rally crowd for the trip back to America.

We flew IMC all the way at FL120, and broke out at 2000 ft with 6 miles in haze (New York Style) on the ILS. We touched down at 15:15Z.



Final Approach into Sondrestromfjord, Northern Greenland, on the Return Trip

4. Conclusion

Remember that this trip was flown before the days of EFIS, GPS, and cellular phones. I feel particularly fortunate that I learnt to fly in the very last generation of “basic, fly by the seat of your pants” pilots. This trip, while it was a tremendous confirmation for this (then) young naïve pilot, was also a confident stepping-stone to my future career.

All in all, it was a fairly routine trip. Two competent pilots, well grounded in Instrument procedures, Pilotage and Dead-Reckoning, with a bonus in Solar Navigation, all came together to make it so.

It confirmed that real, solid basics had been laid down in my foundation during the late 1970’s, and could be confidently relied upon in the future. I went on to fly with Continental Express in the Canadian and US Northeast, a tour of humanitarian charters in Africa (to get the ego back down to earth), a very rewarding tour as Program Manager - FlightSafety at Boeing-de Havilland Toronto, Check Pilot at Adria Airways, Line Pilot at Arkia Airlines, and Aeroel Airways flying in Europe, Russia, and the Middle East. Nearly 30 years, and 10,000 hours. Very modestly, a good life.

The world today is much smaller and quicker in this modern electronic age, but I always wonder if the average new pilot learning today will ever have the satisfaction of discovering whether he can safely pit his wits against the elements, without all this new electronic gadgetry to lean on, and still come out confidently on top.

5. Highlights of my Flying Career



1981, August 3rd – Oshkosh, Wisconsin – right in the middle of the PATCO strike



1986-1989, Northern Canada – deHavilland country



1989, March – the Sudan, Africa, during UN Famine Relief Flights – the dirtiest DHC-7 I ever had the privilege of flying!



1989, March – the Sudan during UN Famine Relief Flights – a thank-you from the local dignitaries.



1994, July 23rd , Adria Airways' Inauguration flight into Dubrovnik, Croatia, after cessation of hostilities; Captain Vladimir Kocevar – Chief Pilot at right.



1999, Aeroel Airways, on a flight in the Mediterranean area.